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THE ANTI-MILITARY APPARAT OF THE NAMBO REGIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE
LAO DONG PARTY IN SOUTH VIETNAM

MARCH 1961

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The Nambo Regional Committee. The Nambo Regional Committee of the Lao Dong Party (CP of Vietnam) is responsible for all Lao Dong activity in the Cochinchina sector of South Vietnam and the Saigon/Cholon metropolitan area. It has no command authority in central Vietnam and the highlands (PMS) area although the lower echelons of the clandestine operations it directs may spill over into those areas. The Nambo Regional Committee has a standing committee which ^{generally} ~~is located~~ *holds its* ~~for~~ *at a secret headquarters* full executive sessions ~~in Cambodia, then South Vietnam,~~ and also possesses a secretariat which functions as its executive arm in implementing policy and coordinating activity. The secretariat coordinates the functions of the various special staffs and the relationships between each subordinate level of the party. It also has full control of the communications - liaison support mechanism (Giao Lien or Technical Apparat) throughout all of its area of jurisdiction. (The Technical Apparat has the responsibility of satisfying the demands and needs of components of the clandestine party or operational units for safehouses, courier service, dead drops, and contact men.)

The Nambo Regional Committee has a collection of seven technical or special staffs covering various phases of its activity. Each staff is actually an operational element functioning at the discretion and under the authority of the secretariat. Three, dealing with finance, party organization and training of cadres, provide for the operational

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administration of the clandestine Lao Dong Party organizations in the Nambo area. The rest (Ban Nong Van, Staff for the Peasantry; Ban Ton Giao Van, Staff for Religious Elements; Ban Binh Van, Staff for Activities Against the Military; and Ban Dich Tinh, Staff for the Enemy Situation or Intelligence Staff) are concerned with clandestine operations. The staff functions are duplicated on the inter-provincial, provincial, district (or municipal) and township levels (except that there is no Dich Tinh element below the district level).

The deputy secretary general of the secretariat is a member of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) Military Intelligence Office (Quan Bao) and is charged with direction of clandestine espionage and covert subversive action and their coordination, on the part of all subordinate Nambo elements, particularly the Dich Tinh and the Binh Van (the secretary general being charged with over-all responsibility for Communist activity in the south, particularly those matters dealing with organization). It is believed that the deputy secretary general is also responsible for the Giao Lien or Technical Apparat. This division of labor is apparently followed in each of the subordinate committees of the Lao Dong Party in the Nambo area: the chief being primarily concerned with party activity, organization and coordination of all efforts; while the number two man is usually a clandestine operations specialist whose particular bailiwick is the direction of the work of the special staffs for espionage and

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subversion. The one exception would seem to be the Technical Apparat. Below the inter-provincial level, control of the Technical Apparat apparently reverts solely to the Secretary of the Standing Committee at each party level.

The Dich Tinh is the primary executive arm for Lao Dong Party espionage in South Vietnam. With its own private channel of communications and couriers to corresponding units at lower levels it more nearly resembles an intelligence service than any of the other special staffs. It is only semi-autonomous, however, and is not independent of the political command on its level. The reason for its separate line of communications is primarily security of transmittal rather than any serious intention of freeing it from control of the party echelon. Coordination between superior and inferior echelons of the Dich Tinh is nevertheless closer than most of the other special staffs, including the Binh Van.

The Ban Binh Van staff of the Nambo Regional Committee has the responsibility for direction and guidance of the continuing and very important tasks of demoralizing, proselytizing, and penetrating military units in South Vietnam. It is also responsible for guidance of highly mobile paramilitary operations against the Vietnamese armed forces. While the primary functions of the Binh Van staff are duplicated on the inter-provincial, provincial, district or municipal, and township levels of the party, the paramilitary guidance function is believed

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to rest entirely with the highest echelon. Each subordinate echelon of the Binh Van is controlled by the command element of which it is a part and communicates with the higher echelon staff only through the secretariat of its own headquarters. There is one possible exception, however: there would appear to be an alternate line of support and communications running from an alleged Binh Van technical branch at the provincial level directly to the Binh Van staff at the Nambo Regional Committee level, by-passing the inter-provincial level entirely.

The Binh Van organization has had considerable success in intimidating Vietnamese National Army (VNA) raw recruits and in sowing discontent among VNA personnel. Personnel involved in Binh Van activities, at least at the higher levels, are believed to be predominantly DRV military intelligence officers or agents who are capable of running some very professional operations in South Vietnam. On the lower levels, in villages and in small paramilitary units, anti-military activity may degenerate into very crude and simple attempts at ~~armed~~ propaganda, forced recruitments of captured soldiers, or cold approaches to regular army trainees.

Although proselytizing among VNA troops, infiltrating organizer cadres into military units, and laying the groundwork for espionage and sabotage targetted against the efforts of the VNA are the prime current functions of the Binh Van units, special commando squads also fall

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within the jurisdiction of Binh Van planning on certain occasions. The military intelligence specialists of the Binh Van plan and supervise, and sometimes actually carry out, special terrorist raids to sabotage a military objective or attack an installation. Such operations, however, are always thoroughly coordinated with the Binh Van staff at the Nambo Regional Committee level and may not be carried out without the approval of that staff.

Inter-provincial level structure and function. The Nambo Regional Committee has under its direct command three inter-provincial zone committees (Lien Tinh-Uy) -- Western, Central, and Eastern -- and a special metropolitan (city) committee for the Saigon/Cholon area. The special staffs of the Nambo Regional Committee are duplicated at the inter-provincial level, the deputy secretary of the standing committee being in charge of Dich Tinh, Binh Van, and the Technical Apparat. The Binh Van staff at this level has no direct line of communications with higher or lower Binh Van units and can communicate only through the respective party committees. The specific structure and functions of the Binh Van staff at the inter-provincial level are unknown. At this level the staff function is clearly separate from the command function. It is believed that the inter-provincial Binh Van inspects, evaluates and offers recommendations on operations carried out within the inter-provincial area.

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Provincial level structure and function. Lao Dong Party provincial activities in South Vietnam are usually under the direction of a provincial committee (also called provincial executive committee) made up of personnel who guide activities in the various districts and municipalities. The mission of this committee is to execute the policy of higher echelons and to carry out operations within the province. Within the committee there is a standing committee usually consisting of at least three persons: a secretary, a deputy secretary, and a standing committee member. The standing committee assigns to provincial committee members the leadership of subordinate specialist units. It is responsible to the provincial committee and to the inter-provincial committee for the leadership of all phases of operations.

Subordinate to the standing committee are a secretariat (the duties of which appear to be primarily of a clerical and operational administrative nature) and at least four specialist units: a clandestine literature production and distribution unit (a technical function), a Binh Van unit, a Dich Tinh unit, and a unit of the Technical Apparatus. The latter is under the direct leadership (at the policy level) of the secretary of the standing committee. It is composed of a chief (not identifiable with the secretary), two deputies, and a number of operational cadres. It is divided into three compartmented cells: a cell for liaison upward with the inter-provincial committee, a cell for liaison downward with district and municipal committees, and a cell for lateral liaison with the standing committee.

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The Binh Van unit at the provincial level is responsible for the submission of general reports on the situation and operation of similar units at the district or municipal levels, as well as of its own cadres, to the secretary of the provincial standing committee. The chief and deputy chief of the provincial Binh Van unit are responsible for the mounting, maintenance, and inspection of the activities of the Binh Van units within the province. They make studies at three-to-six month intervals and submit their findings to the standing committee for approval. The standing committee, in turn, renders its decisions through official memos sent to district, municipal and township secretaries and distributed by them (through their deputies) to the local Binh Van units along with advice and suggestions for action. The provincial Binh Van unit has no authority to make decisions affecting similar elements at lower echelons. It can only provide, ~~by~~^{by} official memos transmitted via the respective party committees, its viewpoints on the advantages and disadvantages of an action based on a study of reports received; and it can do this only after securing the approval of the provincial standing committee. The provincial Binh Van unit is directly responsible to the Lao Dong Party provincial standing committee, as are other organizations handled by that committee. The technical branch of the provincial Binh Van unit, however, is directly responsible to the Nambo regional Binh Van staff.

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The Binh Van unit at the provincial level comprises the following personnel: Chief. This post is filled by a member of the standing committee of the provincial committee. He is responsible for the regular activities of the unit and submits monthly reports on those activities to the higher authorities through the deputy secretary of the standing committee.

Deputy Chief. This post is filled by a reliable district or municipal committee member. He is especially charged with Binh Van activities in the towns (municipal areas) and also is responsible for activities against government employees.

Cadres. These are usually equal in party rank to a township secretary. One man is responsible for activities against the Security Forces, one for the VNA, and one for families of military men. There is also a secretary responsible for administrative work as well as persons charged with the disposition of personnel and subordinate units. In addition to the regular members of the Binh Van unit there are usually a number of specialists responsible for various branches of the armed forces. In all cases, the number of cadres is not fixed, but depends upon the local requirements of the organization.

District and municipal level structure and function. Where a district or municipal (town) committee is of sufficient size, there may be organized a standing committee. Otherwise, guidance for the day-to-day

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execution of policy is the responsibility of the secretary and his deputy. These committees do not generally originate policies for their subordinate townships, but direct and guide the townships and their subordinate specialist units in the execution of policies and directives from higher echelons. Subordinate to the standing committee at the district and municipal level are the following specialist units: a Dich Tinh unit, a Binh Van unit, and a unit of the Technical Apparat (in addition, a district committee may possess an armed guard unit for protection of committee personnel and documents during meetings). The Technical Apparat at this level is directly controlled by the committee secretary who deals with the operational chief of the technical unit. This unit is composed of a chief, a deputy chief, and a number of cadres (total personnel involved seems to vary from five to ten). The technical cadres are broken down into two compartmented groups: one for liaison upward to the provincial committee and one for liaison downward with the township committees (or township cell headquarters).

At the district or municipal level the deputy secretary usually functions as head of the Binh Van unit. In cases where there is no deputy secretary, or if he lacks the special abilities or ease of mobility required, ~~an~~ an able and competent district or municipal committeeman is chosen to head the unit.

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The Binh Van unit of a district committee may comprise the following personnel:

Chief. This post is usually filled by the deputy secretary of the district committee or a reliable committee member. He submits monthly reports to the provincial level through the district committee.

Specialists with the following assignments:

1 responsible for the Security Forces (Bao-An-Doan),

1 responsible for the militia (Tong-Doan Dan-Ve),

1 responsible for activities against the families of
military men,

1 responsible for activities against government employees, and

1 responsible for the regular army (if any VNA units happen
to be based in the district).

The number of specialists in a district Binh Van is dependent upon the size of the district and the number of military personnel therein. In a district or township where there is a military force of one platoon or more, the district Binh Van unit is in charge. If the force is less than one platoon, however, the responsibility rests with the township Binh Van.

The Binh Van unit of a municipal (town) committee is usually composed of from three to five cadres, depending upon requirements, as follows:

Chief. This post may be filled by the deputy secretary or a municipal committeeman chosen for his ability and competence. He submits reports to the deputy chief of the provincial Binh Van through the respective

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party committees concerned.

Specialists with the following assignments:

- 1 responsible for the Security Forces,
- 1 responsible for the police, and
- 1 responsible for families of military men.

If there is an airfield in the area, an additional man is put in charge of activities against it.

Township level structure and function. At the township level there apparently may be either township committees or township cell headquarters (probably depending upon the size and sophistication of the party organization in any particular township). In at least one province the township cell headquarters were limited to five members with a secretary and a deputy secretary. Where there are more members, sub-cells are organized. In the less sophisticated township organizations there are usually no organized specialist units. Instead, specialist units at the district or municipal level assign one of their cadres to the townships to take charge of action directed against the township administration or against local military units. In the larger townships there may be a township committee and a standing committee as well as an organized Binh Van unit (there is no Dich Tinh unit below the district or municipal level). It is not known whether there is ever an element of the Technical Apparatus at the township level and under the control of the township secretary. It is probable that, in the more sophisticated township organizations, there is a technical unit.

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A township Binh Van unit may include:

Chief. This post would be filled by the deputy secretary or by a township standing committee member (unless a municipal or district Binh Van cadre was assigned to the position). It is worth noting that this individual must be a "lawful man" (that is, a secret party member possessing a legal cover which permits freedom of mobility within his area and which serves to screen his illegal activities from the authorities) or a cadre from another area (who, being unknown to the local authorities as a Communist, is able to move about freely).

Specialists with the following assignments:

1 responsible for the militia, and

1 responsible for activities against government employees.

If there should be militia from another area stationed in the township, then an additional person may be placed in charge of activities against them. If there are Security Force personnel in the township to the amount of less than one platoon, then an additional cadre may be needed. Also, in a township frequently visited by regular army troops, a hamlet Binh Van unit may be established to handle activities against them.

Compartmentation. No member of a Binh Van unit, whether at the provincial, district, town or township level, is allowed to enquire into the activities of his colleagues. Only the chief of the unit, by virtue of his position, is privy to all the secrets of his subordinates. A

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specialist responsible for activities against a particular branch of the armed forces is authorized to deal with others concerned with that branch, but outside his special task he is kept in ignorance of the party's organizational work even if it be at his own level or lower.

Importance of anti-military activities. Although the Vietnamese Communists maintain that their political struggle will eventually bring them victory, they realize it will be a long and difficult road and seek to make their Binh Van activists aware of this fact. They urge the cadres to learn to take skillful advantage of every legal, semi-legal, or clandestine technique in order to maintain their support within the military and the government, without, however, being over-eager and thus compromising their efforts. The Communists feel that anti-military activities must be an uninterrupted action against the regime, using every means to create disunity, panic, doubts and conflict. In their subversive task they seek first to destroy the confidence of the military, thus creating the proper atmosphere for the eventual collapse of the regime.

The activities of Binh Van units are supplemented by even broader (if less professional) agitational efforts by all Lao Dong Party members. The provincial leadership of the Lao Dong Party, therefore stresses the importance of Binh Van activities to the basic party organizations and the Labor Youth groups. This is done through training courses which are given to all party members, particularly those living close to

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regular army posts, in areas where many families of military men reside, or in areas frequently garrisoned by combat troops. This period of study generally lasts three days (covering three lessons) and, in addition to the making up of a general report on a monthly plan for anti-military activities, to be conducted by each member of the Lao Dong party or Labor Youth group concerned, covers the following: the importance of Binh Van activities; the principles followed and methods used in carrying them out; and the task of gaining the support of the families of military men. Such training is conducted initially for township committeemen by the local district or municipal committee (presumably ~~conducted~~ by cadres of the Binh Van unit). After completion of his training at the district level, the township committeeman then trains the leaders of the basic party organizations under him who, in turn, train the party members.

In its plan of activities, the basic party organization determines the scope of its efforts against families of military men and assigns duties in connection with that work (it is particularly concerned with the Security Forces and the Militia); establishes precautions against action by the authorities against its base of operations; develops its plans for winning the minds of military personnel, protecting their interests and maintaining the party's support in the military (where it exists); and carries out a program of "education," urging the

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youth to struggle against military draft and causing the families of military men to seek to have their fathers, sons, husbands, or relatives released from military duty.

Objectives and methods of Vietnamese Communist anti-military activities. The Binh Van organization of the Vietnamese Communist Party in South Vietnam has four principal objectives:

- a. gaining the support of families of military men,
- b. dissemination of propaganda,
- c. recruitment of penetration agents (within the military, for the most part, although agents are also sought within government offices and the police),
- d. organizing "struggles" within the military.

In carrying out the above objectives, the main tool of the Binh Van units are assets within the families of military men. The Communists realize that the heart of the military man is bound up with his family and thus his family is his most vulnerable point. Vietnamese Communist cadres use the friendly approach with regard to local families who have sons or relatives in any of the armed forces or in the civil service, stressing the unity of the armed forces, etc., and based on the Vietnamese Communist document "Statutes of the Fatherland Front." In the case of military men stationed in an area who have no families with them, the Communists approach local people known to be friendly to them, inviting them to dinner and to friendly get-togethers in order to gain their support.

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Using these local people, it is then possible to determine the location and accessibility of the soldiers' families and to propagandize them by letters or through the Binh Van unit in their area. Communists press them to urge their sons, brothers, or husbands (as the case may be) through letters or personal contact to accept the party-line and to recognize the cause of the Communists as a just one. These, in turn, are expected to rally their comrades and their families to the Communist cause. The ultimate goal of the Communists is to obtain an increasing number of penetration agents within the military. (In the case of the Security Forces in any given area they seek to gain the support of at least 50% of the force involved.)

In carrying out its investigation of the families of military men, the Anti-Military unit categorizes them as follows:

Group a. (Cadres) Those military families who have already been won over and are participating in Anti-Military activities, having first been tested.

Group b. (Sympathizers) Those who accept the Communist line but are still afraid to take part in Anti-Military activities.

Group c. Those who are uncommitted.

Group d. Those who are prejudiced against the Communists and still fight against them, but who must be won over.

The Communists use all sorts of methods in their approach to the military: their feeling for their families, bribery, women, etc. In

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propagandizing the regular army men they seek to attract them with propaganda centered around the slogan "Worker-Peasant-Military Alliance". In the case of those elements that cannot be organized, called by the Communists "Devils", the Communists seek to intimidate them through warning letters, threats, death warrants, and other means.

Recruitment of military personnel. Once a military man has accepted the Communist line, Binh Van unit cadres step in and recruit him as a penetration agent, transmitting his assignments through his family who then have the task of maintaining regular and secret contact with the Binh Van cadres concerned. Before recruitment, however, the target individual is taken through the following phases of development:

a. Investigation. This covers name, age, social status, origin, past and present addresses, motives for joining the military, length of service, record in the service, attitude towards the Lao Dong Party, degree of knowledge of the need for resistance (in other words how close he is ideologically to the Communist line already), family relationships, relatives, friends or relatives in the government service (covering their location and degree of influence), his current aspirations (Does he desire to leave the service or make a career of it? Is he satisfied with his salary or family allowance?), etc.

b. Ideological indoctrination. ^{This is} Managed through family or friends.

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c. Re-investigation. This is probably a double-check to see if the target individual has reported the propaganda approach.

d. Test assignments. These would be small jobs designed to determine the sincerity of the target individual.

e. Re-investigation of ideology. This would be a final check to see how much of the indoctrination "took."

f. Recruitment. The actual recruitment is made by a cadre of the Binh Van unit concerned: the Communists never use a penetration agent to recruit another penetration agent. After recruitment the Binh Van cadres do not make any further direct contact with the penetration agent, except in the case of an emergency. Even then the contact is arranged secretly by a third person (a cut-out). Although there may be more than one penetration agent within a given military unit or administrative body, the Binh Van cadres control each agent separately in order to provide maximum security for the entire net. Using this technique of individual leadership, the cadres are able to follow closely the activities of each agent. Eventually they progress from the development of scattered individuals within a unit to the organization of Labor Youth (those from 18-25 years of age) and Lao Dong Party key cadre (from 26 on up) groups. When the number of Labor Youth or Lao Dong Party members in a particular unit becomes sufficiently large, the Binh Van cadres organize them into 3-man cells (either

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Labor Youth cells or Lao Dong Party cells; they apparently don't mix them) under a cell leader. In such cases, the cell leader is under the direct leadership of the Binh Van cadres and contacts the cell members individually (no cell meetings are held).

When a penetration agent is transferred to another area, arrangements are made by which he may be suitably identified and picked up as an agent by the Binh Van unit in the new location. Should contact with the agent be broken off by sudden transfer or as a result of increased security precautions or investigation by the authorities, the agent must on the one hand seek to re-establish contact through his family and on the other hand calmly continue with his duties.

Communist activities against military officers. The Vietnamese Communists feel that military officers form the backbone of the present regime in South Vietnam and thus regard them as a primary target for the Binh Van units. In their experience, such action, if successful, greatly aids activities carried on at lower levels within the armed forces. The Communists first investigate the families of the officers, then they categorize the officers (as described previously) according to their motivations, attitudes and accessibility. They then proceed to develop those who are most accessible and cooperative. In the case of officers who are fully cooperative, they may meet with them in order to work out a plan for subversive action to be carried out within their respective units of command. The names and positions of officers cooperating with Binh Van units are kept strictly secret.

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Propaganda themes utilized in the Anti-Military struggle. In their activities against the military the Communists stress the following:

a. For all armed units: oppose any cuts in salary or family allowances; demand salary increases, payment on time, and assurance of family allowances; oppose strict controls; demand freedom of movement, the privilege of receiving and writing letters freely (i.e., with no censorship), and the freedom to read newspapers; oppose such work as road or bridge building; and refuse to fight religious sects, participate in raids, collect taxes, etc.

b. For township militia: demand permission to return to work for the family; demand assurance that the unit will not serve outside of the township; demand freedom to go out to the shopping areas; take turns returning home (without official permission) -- refuse to stay in the unit; refuse to take action against religious sects; and refuse to spend nights in the field.

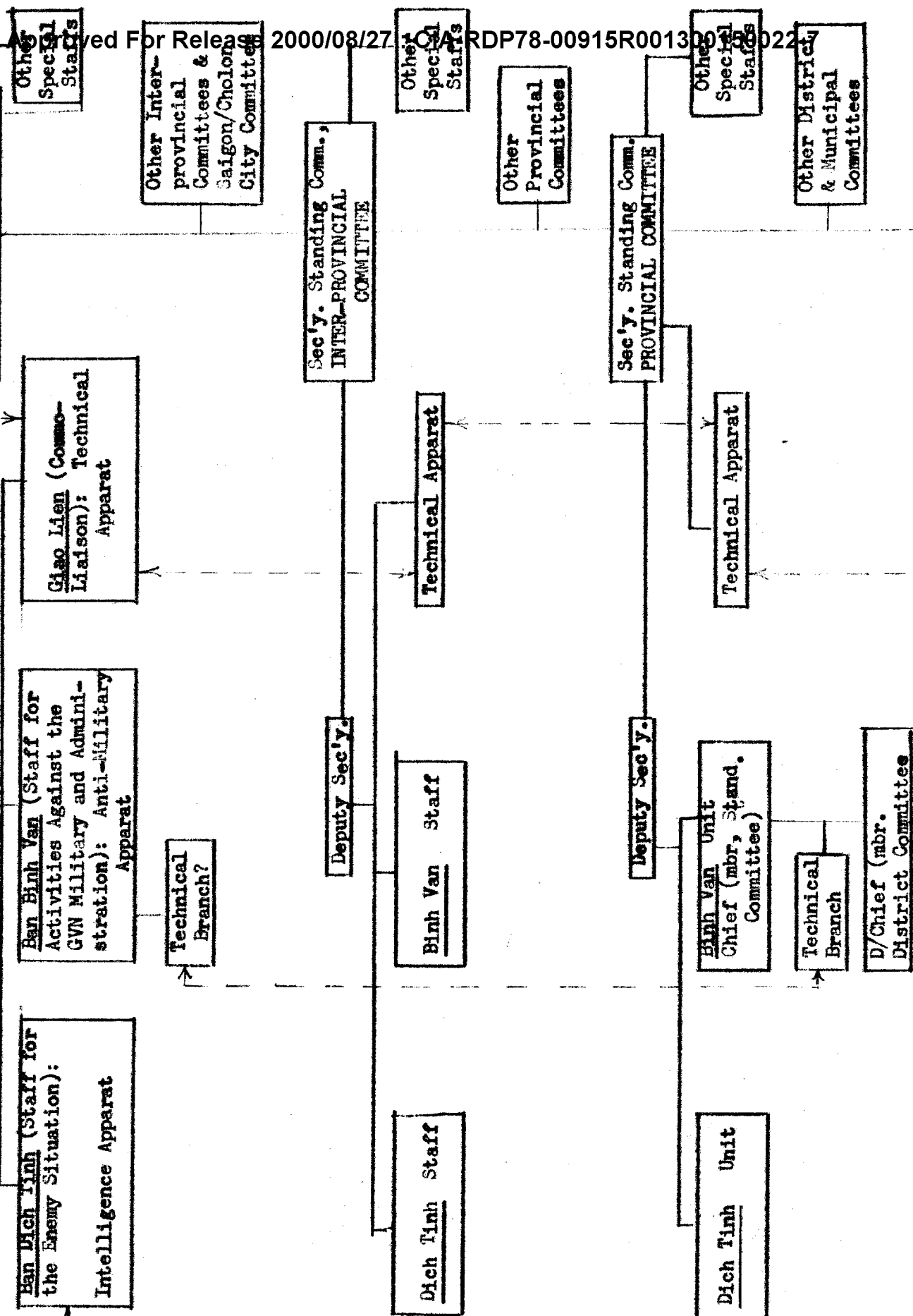
c. For the Security Forces: demand that families be allowed to accompany the troops; refuse to associate with the regular army; refuse to serve outside of the province; demand full payment of salary on time; and demand a family allowance.

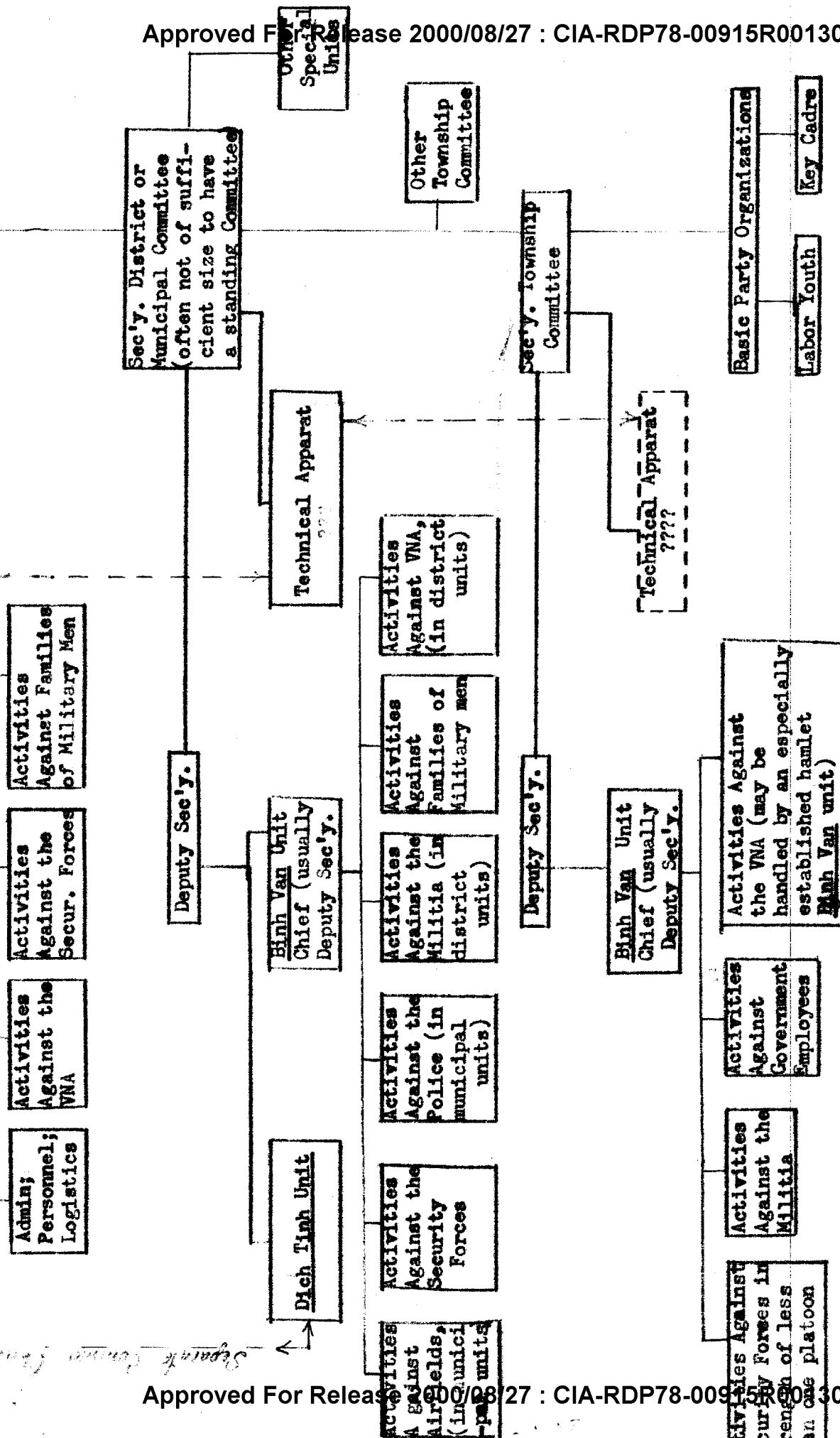
d. For the regular army: refuse rough training; demand that training time be cut down; demand an increase in rest periods, health protection and compensation; refuse to serve in jungle areas; and demand that the troops be allowed leave and given permission to visit their families.

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